Fayette County Public Schools

2024 Mission/Vision Revision Report

Where Excellence and Creativity Merge

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BACKGROUND

The Fayette County Public Schools mission and vision statements should be reviewed no less than every five years to ensure that there is alignment between the school system's mission/vision and present needs of the community. The current mission and vision statements were adopted in 2016. Senior staff conducted an evaluation of the mission statement June 2023 using the following measurement:

Mission Statement Evaluation	Yes	No
The Mission statement is a statement of our organization's purpose	X	
The Mission statement fits the current market environment		X
The Mission statement is based on our core competencies	X	
The Mission statement is motivating and inspires employee's commitment		X
The Mission statement is realistic	X	
The Mission statement is specific, short, focused, and memorable		X
The Mission statement is clear and easily understood		X
The Mission statement says what the organization wants to be remembered for		X

The evaluation results showed that the statement needed to be rewritten to promote memorability, inspiration, uniqueness, and clarity. The vision statement will also be rewritten to align to the new mission. Before new statements are drafted, input will be gathered from primary-internal stakeholders (employees, parents, and students [high school]) and secondary-external stakeholders (community) to gain insight about their thoughts, feelings, and opinions of the school system. This will be done through a survey (quantitative data) to all FCPS stakeholders and focus groups (qualitative data) held in each high school feeder pattern by invitation to employees, parents, and community members.

The data (quantitative and qualitative) will be collated and synthesized, looking for reoccurring themes and words, which will be used to inspire the creation of the new drafts. Feedback on the new statements will be sought from FCPS constituents before adoption and finalization.

The revision process will span the 2022-2023 school year (August-May), following the suggested timeline:

Activity	Audience	Start	End
Survey (internal/external)	(Internal) staff, parents, all high school students; (external) Fayette County residents, businesses	9/5/23	9/25/23
Focus Groups by high school feeder pattern. Staff focus group 4:30-5:30 p.m.; Parent/community focus group 6-7 p.m.			
	Sandy Creek High	10/4/23	10/4/23
	Student Advisory Council	10/12/23	10/12/23
	Whitewater High	10/23/23	10/23/23
	McIntosh High	10/26/23	10/26/23
	Starr's Mill High	10/30/23	10/30/23
	Fayette County High	11/2/23	11/2/23
Analysis of survey/focus group input	Leadership staff	11/6/23	12/20/23
Draft new mission/vision statements	Leadership staff	1/2/24	3/29/24
Input on draft (internal/external)	(Internal) staff, parents, all high school students; (external) Fayette County residents, businesses	4/8/24	4/19/24
Adjustments based on feedback	Leadership staff	4/30/24	5/10/24
Approval	Board of Education	5/20/24	5/20/24

Communication planning for rollout	Leadership staff	6/3/24	7/12/24
Rollout of new mission/vision statements	(internal) staff, parents, students; (external) Fayette County residents, businesses	7/22/24	8/7/24
Ongoing communication of mission/vision	(internal) staff, parents	8/24	5/24

SURVEY

On September 5, 2023, Fayette County Public Schools launched a survey inviting FCPS stakeholders to share their insights regarding the school system's mission and vision statements. Data collection concluded on September 25, 2023. The invitation to participate was sent to all staff, parents, and high school students. It was also made available to the Fayette County community at large via promotion through the local media, FCPS social media platforms, and community organizations (Fayette FACTOR, Fayette County Chamber of Commerce, NAACP, City of Fayetteville). Participants were asked to rate (agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree) different aspects of the mission and vision statements. Additionally, they were asked open ended questions about areas they marked as "disagree" or "strongly disagree." Other questions focused on words and/or phrases missing from the mission and vision statements, and words and/or phrases that participants would use to describe the school system. (See Appendix A for survey questions.)

METHODOLOGY – SURVEY

Response Rate Calculation
Email messages were sent via ParentSquare to 22,150 staff and parents (15,498 opened) and 6,942 students (3,715 opened). The ParentSquare platform sent the invitation to staff and parents as a group and was unable to provide separate numbers for staff and parents, so they are represented as a combined group in this summary report.

A total of 1,681 staff, parents and students combined participated in the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 9%. The response rate was calculated using the total number of respondents divided by the number of emailed invitations that were opened. **Note:** The response rate for this group is likely larger when taking into consideration that the same parental household received multiple emails (one per parent), but some may have opted to complete one survey together instead of separately. Respondents who identified their main role as "community member" were counted as either "employee" "student" or "parent," depending on their answer to the preceding survey question about their multiple affiliated roles with the school system.

A total of 32 community members participated in the survey. An exact response rate for this group cannot be calculated since several outside platforms with unknown audience reach were used to promote the survey.

Note: Acceptable response rates for surveys are not strictly established; however, a typical survey response rate goes from 5% to 30%.

A 10% response rate was the goal set for the staff and parents group (target met) and a 5% response rate was set for the student group (target missed by 2%).

Group	Population (emails opened)	Respondents	Response Rate
Staff and Parents	15,498	1,558	10%
Students	3715	123	3%
Overall System-Wide	**19,213**	**1681**	**9%**

Response Analysis
ChatGPT (chat.openai.com) was used to analyze sentiment and common themes from the responses. GPT was asked to craft the ideal prompt based on gauging reoccurring themes and sentiment within the responses. The prompt was executed three times for each question to ensure output accuracy. The chart below shows the prompts used for each question that solicited feedback or opinion.

Question	Prompt
Mission and Vision Statement: 1. Please elaborate on any areas marked Disagree or Strongly Disagree. 2. What aspects of our current mission do you like? (May identify up to 3 items) 3. What is missing from our current mission? (May identify up to 3 items)	Please analyze the series of comments and identify any recurring themes or patterns present in the discussion.
What three words or phrases would you use to best describe our school district? What makes FCPS special, unique, different using a word or short phrase (e.g., an essential element of FCPS' identity).	Please analyze the words and phrases that respondents have used to describe our school system. Provide insights into common themes, sentiments, and any notable patterns that emerge from their descriptions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – SURVEY

Respondents were asked to identify all their affiliations with the school system in addition to the affiliation they consider to be primary. Many respondents had multiple affiliations as employees, parents, students, and community members. Over half of respondents indicated that their primary affiliation was as a parent, followed by employee, student, and community member (42 parents; 4 employees, 1 student), respectively. Additionally, respondents were asked to identify the area where they live and/or work. Most identified with one of the five high schools: Starr's Mill High, 11.2%; McIntosh High, 7.1%; Fayette County High, 6.5%; Sandy Creek High, 6.2%, Whitewater High, 6%. The most selected middle school was Rising Starr Middle, 4.9%; the most selected elementary school was Crabapple Lane Elementary, 3.6%. The other locations ranged from over 1% to 3.6%. (See findings for questions 1, 2 on page 4; and 3 on page 5.)

Mission Statement
Nearly 79-90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the mission statement is clear, concise, defines who we are, describes what we do, and defines who we serve. The strongest agreement was that the statement is clear (90%) and is concise (90%). The next highest levels of agreement were that the statement describes what we do (83%), defines who we serve (81%) and describes what we do (79%). Just over 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the mission statement distinguishes us from other school districts. (See findings for question 4 on page 5.)

Respondents were asked to elaborate on the areas above that they marked disagree or strongly disagree. Important reoccurring themes include lack of differentiation (statement too generic), lack of inclusivity (doesn't include students who struggle), undefined target audience (K-12 or higher ed), not inspiring or unique (lacking personalization), ambiguity and word choice (some words are vague and confusing). (See analysis of question 5 on page 6.)

When respondents were asked what aspects of the mission statement they liked the most, the top three responses were "positively impact our world," "confidently face challenges," and "embrace opportunities." (See analysis of question 6 on page 6.)

The top three areas respondents identified when asked what is missing from the mission statement included embracing diversity, leadership development, and community and collaboration. (See analysis of question 7 on page 7.)

Vision Statement
Between 78-93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the vision statement is clear, concise, distinguishes us from other school districts, is inspirational/aspirational, and describes the future we wish for our children. The strongest agreement was that the statement is clear (93%) and is concise (93%). The next highest level of agreement was that the statement describes the future we wish for our children (87%) followed by the statement is inspirational/aspirational

(78%). Just over 70% agreed that vision statement distinguishes us from other school districts. (See findings for question 8 on page 7.)

Respondents were asked to elaborate on the areas above that they marked disagree or strongly disagree. Important reoccurring themes include lack of inspiration, similarity to other schools; prepare students for life locally, not just globally; too much emphasis on work preparation and not enough on personal growth; words such as "capable" were criticized for being too minimal while others were said to be uninspiring. (See analysis of question 9 on page 8.)

When respondents were asked what aspects of the vision statement they liked the most, the top three responses were the words responsibly, productively, effectively, and capable; "living and working in a global environment;" and "working and living effectively." (See analysis of question 10 on page 8.)

The top three areas respondents identified when asked what is missing from the vision statement included personal development, diversity and inclusion, and contributing to local community. (See analysis of question 11 on page 9.)

District Description
Respondents were asked to provide three words and/or phrases that make Fayette County Public Schools special and unique, an essential element of the school system's identity.

Important themes include family-centered, respect and kindness, high expectations and achievement, and community engagement and support. (See analysis of question 12 on page 9.)

FINDINGS – SURVEY

Question 1: What is your role at FCPS. Check all that apply.

Below are the number of responses as well as the percentages of total responses from individuals self-identifying all their affiliations with Fayette County Public Schools. Many respondents identified multiple affiliations.

Answer choices	Responses*	Number of Responses
Employee	36.6%	616
Parent	66%	1109
Student	6.5%	110
Community member	14.6%	246

Percentages are based on 2,081 respondents to this question; the total exceeds 100% since individual respondents could select multiple affiliations.

Question 2: Which of the following do you consider to be your primary role with FCPS? Please select one.

Below are the number of responses as well as the percentages of total responses from individuals self-identifying their primary affiliation with Fayette County Public Schools.

Answer choices	Responses*	Number of Responses
Employee	32.2%	542
Parent	57.6%	969
Student	7.3%	123
Community member**	2.8%	47

Percentages are based on 1,681 respondents to this question.
*** Respondents who identified their main role as "community member" also answered either "employee" (4), "parent" (42), or "student" (1) to the preceding survey question about multiple roles.*

Question 3: What is your primary location at Fayette County Public Schools. Please select one.

Below are the number of response as well as the percentages of total responses from individuals self-identifying their primary school, working and/or living location.

Answer choices	Responses*	Number of Responses
Braelinn Elementary	1.4%	23
Cleveland Elementary	1.4%	24
Crabapple Lane Elementary	3.6%	60
Fayetteville Elementary	2.2%	37
Huddleston Elementary	2.6%	44
Inman Elementary	2%	33
Kedron Elementary	3.3%	55
North Fayette Elementary	2.7%	46
Oak Grove Elementary	2%	34
Peachtree City Elementary	2.5%	42
Peeples Elementary	3.3%	56
Robert J. Burch Elementary	2.6%	43
Sara Harp Minter Elementary	2.8%	47
Spring Hill Elementary	3.5%	59
Bennett's Mill Middle	3.5%	59
Flat Rock Middle	4.5%	75
J.C. Booth Middle	3.6%	61
Rising Starr Middle	4.9%	83
Whitewater Middle	3.6%	61
Fayette County High	6.5%	110
Fayette LIFE Academy	2%	105
McIntosh High	7.1%	120
Sandy Creek High	6.2%	105
Starr's Mill High	11.2%	189
Whitewater High	6%	101
District Office	3.2%	53
Community Member/No Children	1.5%	26

Percentages are based on 1,681 respondents to this question.

Mission Statement Questions

Question 4: A quality mission statement does two important things: a) defines the purpose of the organization, and b) differentiates the organization from similar entities.

The following is the current FCPS mission statement (adopted by the board of education June 2016): "Our mission is to forge and equip a community of learners who confidently face challenges, embrace opportunities, and positively impact our world."

Please review the current FCPS mission statement and indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. The current district mission statement…

The table below list the percentages of respondents who agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each statement pertaining to the mission.

Statement	Strongly Disagree*	Disagree*	Agree*	Strongly Agree*
Is clear	1.6%	8.6%	48.1%	41.8%
Is concise	1.5%	8.6%	48.4%	41.5%
Distinguishes us from other schools/school systems	3.9%	25.9%	45.2%	7.0%
Defines who we are	3.9%	47.8%	47.9%	30.7%
Describes what we do	2.7%	14.9%	49.6%	33.4%
Identifies who we serve	3.7%	14.9%	48.7%	32.7%

Rows for each statement may not equal 100% due to rounding. Percentages are based on 1,681 respondents to this question.

Question 5: Please elaborate on any areas marked Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

Many respondents gave their reasons for why they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements in question 4. Common themes along with the most reoccurring reasons for their selection are listed below.

1. **Lack of Differentiation:** Respondents feel that the current mission statement does not distinguish Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS) from other school districts. They believe it is too generic and could apply to any school system.

2. **Lack of Inclusivity:** Respondents mention that the mission statement does not clearly include all students, especially those who may not confidently face challenges, struggle academically or may not fit the traditional mold of success. They think it should explicitly state that the school system is inclusive and supportive of all learners, including those who may struggle.

3. **Undefined Target Audience:** There is confusion about who the statement is addressing and serving. Some respondents are unsure whether it is directed at children, adults, teachers, or a broader community of learners. Some comments mention that the reference to "a community of learners" doesn't make it clear that the mission statement is about K-12 education.

4. **Not Inspiring or Unique:** Many felt that the mission statement does not inspire, connect, or feel unique to the county and its school system. It was described as disconnected, not motivating, and lacking personalization.

5. **Ambiguity and Word Choice:** Many respondents mention that terms like "forge and equip" and "community of learners" are seen as vague and confusing. They believe these words are dated and suggest an assembly-line approach to education rather than nurturing unique individuals. The term "positively impact our world" was considered vague and lacking a clear focus on education.

Question 6: Please review the current FCPS mission statement. "Our mission is to forge and equip a community of learners who confidently face challenges, embrace opportunities, and positively impact our world."

What aspects of our current mission do you like? (May identify up to 3 items)

The top 5 most liked areas of the mission statement are listed below along with the most common sentiments for why these areas were chosen.

1. **Positively Impact Our World:** This phrase appears consistently throughout the responses and is clearly a key aspect that resonates with respondents. It conveys a strong commitment to making a positive difference in the world. The idea of creating a positive change is a central theme.

2. **Confidence in Facing Challenges:** Confidence building is recognized as a vital aspect of education. Responses mention the importance of instilling confidence in students, creating an encouraging environment, and building self-assurance and resilience.

3. **Embracing Change and Opportunities:** Encouraging students to embrace change and opportunities is a recurring theme, suggesting a forward-looking attitude that implies a readiness to explore and make the most of chances for growth and impact.

4. **Community of Learners:** The term "community of learners" is praised for its focus on collective growth. It suggests a sense of unity and shared goals among learners.

5. **Equipping and Empowering Learners:** The term "equip" is frequently used, highlighting the importance of providing students with the tools and skills they need to succeed. The term also suggests a collaborative and supportive learning environment.

Question 7: Please review the current FCPS mission statement. "Our mission is to forge and equip a community of learners who confidently face challenges, embrace opportunities, and positively impact our world."

What is missing from our current mission? (May identify up to 3 items)

The top 5 aspects respondents said that are missing from the mission statement are listed below along with the most common sentiments for why these areas were chosen.

1. **Embracing Diversity:** Multiple responses highlight the importance of embracing diversity in all its forms, not just racial diversity. This includes recognizing individual differences, respecting cultural diversity, and promoting inclusivity.

2. **Leadership Development:** Developing leaders, both academically and as responsible citizens, is a recurring theme. Some respondents want to emphasize the cultivation of 21st-century leadership skills.

3. **Community and Collaboration:** Several responses mention the importance of fostering a sense of community, encouraging collaboration, and supporting one another. This includes building strong relationships among students, teachers, and the wider community.

4. **Creativity and Innovation:** Respondents suggested that adding a focus on creativity and innovation, highlighting the importance of nurturing creativity, free thinking, and problem-solving skills among students.

5. **Specificity on "Who":** Respondents mentioned that the mission lacks details on who the community of learners includes.

Vision Statement Questions

Question 8: A vision statement looks to the future and defines aspirations. This differs from the mission statement that focuses on the present and defines purpose.

The following is the current vision of Fayette County Public Schools (adopted by the board of education in June 2016): "Our students will be capable of living and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment."

Please review the current FCPS vision statement and indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. The current district vision statement…

The table below list the percentages of respondents who agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each statement pertaining to the vision.

Statement	Strongly Disagree*	Disagree*	Agree*	Strongly Agree*
Is clear	1.2%	5.6%	50.7%	42.5%
Is concise	1.0%	6.0%	50.5%	42.5%
Distinguishes us from other schools/school systems	3.8%	7.0%	44.7%	27.8%
Inspirational/Aspirational	4.2%	17.7%	45.9%	32.2%
Describes the future we wish for our children	2.9%	9.9%	48.8%	38.5%

Rows for each statement may not equal 100% due to rounding. Percentages are based on 1,681 respondents to this question.

Question 9: Please elaborate on any areas marked Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

Many respondents gave their reasons for why they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements in question 8. Common themes along with the most reoccurring reasons for their selection are listed below.

1. **Lack of Inspiration:** Many respondents mentioned that the vision statement lacked inspiration and did not motivate or excite them. They felt it was too generic and did not set a high standard for students. Some commented that it does not encourage students to have big dreams or envision themselves as future leaders.

2. **Similarity to Other Schools:** Respondents noted that the vision statement did not distinguish the school district from others. They believe it could apply to any academic institution, making it seem generic and unremarkable.

3. **Global vs. Local:** Some respondents question the use of terms like "global environment" and suggest that the focus should be more on preparing students for life locally rather than globally. They emphasize the importance of community and ethical living.

4. **Emphasis on Productivity:** Some respondents suggest that the vision statement focuses too much on productivity and preparing students for the workforce. The feel it does not address students' personal growth, ethics, or aspirations beyond becoming capable workers.

5. **Critique of Specific Words:** There is a critique of specific words used in the statement, such as "capable," "effectively," and "global environment," with some respondents finding these words uninspiring or inappropriate. The use of the word "capable" was criticized for being too minimal.

Question 10: Please review the current FCPS vision statement. "Our students will be capable of living and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment."

What aspects of our current vision do you like? (May identify up to 3 items)

The top 5 most liked areas of the vision statement are listed below along with the most common sentiments for why these areas were chosen.

1. **Core Values and Attributes:** Many respondents emphasize core values and attributes that are desirable for students or individuals to possess. These include responsibility, productivity, effectiveness, and being capable.

2. **Global Perspective:** The theme of preparing students to live and work effectively in a global environment is center to many of the responses. This includes references to global awareness, and global citizenship.

3. **Efficiency and Balance:** There is an emphasis on working and living effectively, with some respondents mentioning work-life balance, and suggesting a desire for students to be capable of efficiently managing their lives and responsibilities.

4. **Equipping Students:** Equipping students with the tools and skills they need is a recurring theme. Several responses mention the importance of equipping learners with the skills and attributes needed for success both now and in the future.

5. **Community and Unity:** A sense of community and unity is expressed in some responses, highlighting the importance of collaboration, and working together.

Question 11: Please review the current FCPS vision statement. "Our students will be capable of living and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment."

What is missing from our current vision? (May identify up to 3 items)

The top 5 aspects respondents said that are missing from the vision statement are listed below along with the most common sentiments for why these areas were chosen.

1. **Personal Development:** Many respondents emphasized the importance of personal development, including character traits like kindness, empathy, resilience, respect, and integrity. Mental health and well-being were also mentioned as essential components of education.

2. **Diversity and Inclusion:** The value of diversity and inclusivity in education was a recurring theme, with a focus on tolerance, cultural appreciation, and acceptance of all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds.

3. **Community and Citizenship:** Several responses highlighted the importance of students contributing positively to their communities and being responsible citizens. While there was acknowledgement of the importance of preparing students for a changing global environment, there was also a call for emphasizing the local and national aspects of education.

4. **Creativity and Innovation:** Creativity and innovation were also commonly mentioned. Respondents want students to be encouraged to think creatively, solve problems and be innovative in their pursuits.

5. **Leadership and Inspiration:** Some responses called for an emphasis on leadership development and inspiring students to excel, innovate, and make a positive impact on the world.

Question 12: What three words or phrases would you use to best describe our school district? What makes FCPS special, unique, different using a word or short phrase (e.g. an essential element of FCPS' identity).

The most reoccurring themes, challenges and concerns, sentiments, and notable patterns, along with the most mentioned explanation for each, are listed in the following tables.

Themes

Theme	Explanation
High Expectations and Achievement	Many respondents mention high standards and expectations for both students and staff. There is a strong emphasis on academic excellence and a commitment to helping students succeed.
Diversity and Inclusivity	Many respondents highlight the diversity of the school system and its inclusive nature. They mention a welcoming and accepting environment that embraces all students, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities.
Community Engagement and Support	Community involvement and support are recurring themes. Many respondents mention the active involvement of parents and the broader community in the education system. This support is seen as a crucial factor in the success of the schools.

Focus on Holistic Development	Several respondents appreciate the school system's commitment to the holistic development of students. This includes not only academics but also fine arts, sports, and character development.
Innovation and Adaptability	There is a strong sense that the school system is innovative and adaptable, preparing students for an ever-changing world. Respondents appreciate efforts to embrace technology and modern teaching methods. They also note creative teaching methods and a forward-thinking approach to education.
Passionate and Dedicated Staff	Many respondents praise the dedication and passion of teachers and staff members. They feel that educators genuinely care about the success and well-being of students.
Respect and Kindness	Respect, kindness, and a positive school culture are important aspects of the school system, according to respondents. These values are seen as integral to creating a safe and supportive learning environment.
Challenges and Continuous Improvement	Some respondents mention challenges and areas for improvement, such as standardized testing emphasis and concerns about a lack of uniqueness. However, they also appreciate the school system's willingness to address these issues and continuously improve.
Preparation for the Future	Many respondents expressed confidence that the school system is preparing students for the future, whether through college readiness, career exploration, or equipping them with the skills needed to succeed in a changing world.
Family Centered Approach	The school system is described as family-focused, with an emphasis on parent involvement and a sense of belonging within the school community.

Challenges and Concerns

Challenge and Concern	Explanation
Lack of Accountability	Some respondents mention a "lack of accountability," suggesting that there may be concerns about how the school system measures and ensures performance and progress.
Overbearing/Overzealous	Respondents use terms like "overbearing" and "overzealous," which may indicate concerns about excessive pressure or expectations placed on students.
Lack of Guidance	"Many options with no guidance" is mentioned, which suggests that there may be concerns about the availability of guidance and support for students in navigating their educational choices.

Conservative/Traditional	While some view the traditional and conservative aspects of your school system positively, others see these traits as potential limitations in terms of adapting to changing educational needs.
Diverse Options	There are mentions of both positive and negative aspects, indicating that there is a diversity of opinions and experiences within your school system.

Sentiments

Sentiment	Explanation
Positive	Overall, the sentiments expressed by respondents are overwhelmingly positive. Words like "amazing," "awesome," and "excellent" are commonly used.
Caring and Dedication	Many respondents emphasize the caring and dedicated nature of the educators and staff within the school system.
Focus on Students	There is a strong focus on student-centered education and a commitment to the success and well-being of students.
Continuous Improvement	Respondents mention a commitment to continuous improvement and a willingness to adapt and evolve.
Community Engagement	The school system is seen as actively engaged with the community, and there is a strong sense of partnership and collaboration

Notable Patterns

Notable Pattern	Explanation
High Expectations	The phrase "high expectations" is consistently mentioned by respondents, indicating a shared belief in setting and achieving high standards for students and staff.
Diversity and Inclusion	Many respondents value the diversity and inclusivity of the school system, viewing it as a source of strength and a reflection of the community.
Community Support	The community's support and involvement in the school system are frequently highlighted, suggesting a strong bond between the school and the community it serves.
Innovation and Creativity	Innovation and creativity are considered essential components of the school system's approach to education, preparing students for a rapidly changing world.

Commitment to Excellence	Respondents consistently emphasize the school system's commitment to excellence, both in academics and in fostering well-rounded individuals.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were hosted by high school feeder patterns in October and November 2023. Two one-hour focus groups were held by each feeder pattern, one for employees (4:30-5:30 p.m.) and a second for parents and community (6-7 p.m.) on the same day. Schools in each feeder pattern were asked to invite 10 employees and 10 parents and/or community members. For the employee focus groups, each feeder was tasked to ensure that at least 10% of the total were classified employees. Schools were also asked to try to achieve gender and racial balance in both focus groups.

Dates for the focus groups:

DATE	FEEDER PATTERN	SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	
			STAFF / % CLASSIFIED	PARENT/COMMUNITY
Oct 4	Sandy Creek HS	NFES, CLES, RJBES, FRMS, SCHS	49 / 10%	52
Oct 23	Whitewater HS	IES, SHMES, WMS, WHS	26 / 3%	28
Oct 26	McIntosh HS	HES, KES, PCES, JCBMS, MHS	25 / 12%	25
Oct 30	Starr's Mill HS	BES, OGES, PES, RSMS, SMHS	39 / 5%	29
Nov 2	Fayette County HS	CES, SHES, FES, BMMS, FCHS	43 / 16%	52

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – FOCUS GROUP

Throughout the county, more than 360 individuals participated in one of the focus groups. A total of 9% of staff members were classified employees; 91% were teachers. Females made up 86% of all focus group participants. Racial makeup is unknown due to nonreporting in some focus groups.

School principals served as facilitators and assistant principals served as note takers. Facilitators participate in a facilitator training workshop to prepare them for their role since most had never facilitated a focus group. They were also provided a script and slide deck to use for both the staff and parent/community focus group.

Focus group participants were divided into small groups of 3 to 5 people. Participants were pre-assigned to a group and effort was made to ensure that participants from the same school were not assigned to the same focus group to get more honest and broader responses.

Facilitators lead participants through two mission statement activities (The 5 "whys" and Who We Serve) and one vision statement activity (Wouldn't It Be Fantastic If…). The concluding activity collected descriptive words and/or phrases about the school system. Findings for these activities are on pages 18-20.

Facilitators and their notetakers reconciled notes no later than 24 hours after the focus group prior to submitting them for analysis.

See Appendix B for the presentations shown to both focus groups.

METHODOLOGY – FOCUS GROUP

Notetaking
Dialog of the focus groups was captured by a notetaker. Notetakers documented words and phrases participants used during discussions as well as any nonverbal behaviors or gestures. They also noted the overall tone of the room (positive negative, indifferent) and if there were any topics of lengthy discussion or particular words and/or phrases that were repeated throughout the discussion. Effort was made to capture comments verbatim as much as possible. No audio or video recorders were used so that participants would feel comfortable to respond candidly.

Analysis of Data
Semantical Content Analysis utilizing the attribution method was employed to examine the frequency with which certain characterizations or descriptors were used across focus groups. Emphasis was placed on adjectives, adverbs and descriptor phrases used in reference to the school system. The frequency of these symbols is interpreted as a measure of importance or emphasis.

FINDINGS – FOCUS GROUP

Mission Statement Activities
Participants were guided through the "5 Whys" exercise to identify the reason the school system exists.

These consistent responses were recorded by notetakers from all focus groups (staff and parents/community) countywide about why the school system exists:

- Make lifelong learners
- Have a positive impact on society
- Develop problem solving skills in the next generation
- Inspire and motivate
- Tap into their potential and make them feel valuable
- Make them critical thinkers in the workforce and life
- To make them think independently and critically
- Build an informed base of citizens so that they can be contributing members of their communities

The follow-up activity addressed the audiences the school system serves (students, parents, employees, community/business). Participants were asked to describe what the school system does, how it does it, and the difference it makes for each audience. In the event of time constraints, facilitators were instructed to ensure that they completed the exercise for the student, parent, and staff audience, and to skip the community/business audience if needed to remain on schedule. Since some focus groups were not able to address the final audience, the analysis focused only on the student, parent, and staff audience. Recorded commonalities/notable remarks across the groups are as follows:

	WHAT WE DO FOR THEM	HOW WE DO IT	DIFFERENCE IT MAKES
STUDENTS	- Safe place to learn - Inspire them - Build sense of self - Build social and emotional support by caring relationships - Love them - Nurture - Motivate - Provide passionate knowledge resources to meet them where they are	- Build connections - Honor their opinion - Teaching - Teamwork - Push boundaries - Providing knowledge and skills in a secure environment - Clean schools - Safe learning environment - Hire quality teachers	- Empowers them to believe in themselves - Teaches them to be empathetic to others - Safe place to fail - Sometimes everything if we do it well - Life trajectory - Their safe place - Inspire and make students excited about learning - Provide security and belonging - Encourages them to be their own person
PARENTS	- Guide - Listen - Partner - Support - Help them see their child in a different light - Advocate and educate	- Communicate - Form an alliance - Build relationships - Love - Provide resources - Make sure their children are safe	- Working towards same goal - Builds empathy - Advocacy for all students - Support away from home - We are teamwork - Fill spaces they can't - Provides a strong sense of community

EMPLOYEES	• Value teachers and their education • Uplift, support • Provide safe and empowering community • Sense of community	• Support • Collaborate • Checking in • Positive work environment	• Feel valued and appreciated • Opportunity to create things outside of school • Supports the growth of staff and students • Builds morale

Vision Statement Activity

Being that a vision statement is aspirational, participants were asked to think "Wouldn't It Be Fantastic if…" and list aspirations for this year, three years from now and five years from now. Recorded common answers across all groups are as follows:

	WOULDN'T IF BE FANTASTIC IF…
END OF THIS YR	• We improved graduation rates • Increase staff attendance • Employees feel valued • Increase test scores • Every student can name their passion • Every student is at grade level • Student attendance improved • All students were able to create goals • All students were better emotionally regulated • All students felt like they had a purpose
END OF 3 YRS	• Model of expertise that others want to learn from • More consistency on what is offered at each school • Embrace different pathways, not just a pathway to college • Students are able to have more life skills • More trade and vocational opportunities offered • Found a balance between technology and pencil • Emotional struggle for kids goes down
END OF 5 YRS	• 100% graduation across all high schools • Create more pathways • Staff lining up to work at our schools • Kids know their direction in life • Increase in literacy rates • Teachers around the world use Fayette County resources • More students going into education • Personalized learning for what students are good at, not all going to college • One of the top school systems in the nation

Closing Activity

Participants were asked for the words and/or phrases they would use if describing the school system to a friend. The sentiment from the groups (staff and parent/community) across all feeder patterns was feelings of:

- Support
- Caring
- Family
- Inspiration
- Safety
- Trust
- Valued
- Motivation
- Communication
- Community
- Respect
- love

Notable Common Words/Phrases by Feeder Pattern

Fayette County High Focus Groups
Notable Common Words/Phrases

Staff	Parent Community
Safe environment for both staff and students	Provides hope and stability
Relationships between schools and families	Foster perseverance, grit and resilience
Customized options for learners	Sense of community
Meet their individual needs and advocate for them	Encouragement
Listen to their input	Communication
Relationships with colleagues	Holistic development of child
Feeling of family/belonging	Feeling of community and belonging
Teach the whole child	Community
Establish relationships	Culture of belonging
Forgive, love and care for them	Feeling of belonging, sense of community
Foster trust	Welcoming environment
Provide a safe learning environment	Safe environment
Nurture them	Sincerity, authenticity, consistency
Team effort	Educates whole child
We are in this together	Empower
Private school education without paying for it	Support
A place where kids/staff/everyone can thrive	High quality education without private school costs
Support	Inspires students to transform dreams into reality
Recognition	People care for them and see them

McIntosh High Focus Groups
Notable Common Words/Phrases

Staff	Parent Community
Amazing teachers that care	Teachers who care
Family oriented	Rigorous but caring and supportive community
Caring teachers	Grow
Build relationships and learn from others	Care
Inspire, encourage	Encourage
Teach them relationships	Inspire
Inspire, encourage	Support
Relationships	Opportunities for growth
Enlighten, encourage	Care
Teach, inspire, encourage	Grow
Build relationships	Inspire
Relationships, partnerships	Support
Treat with respect and appreciation	Building trust

Sandy Creek High Focus Groups
Notable Common Words/Phrases

Staff	Parent Community
Caring school environment	Family feel
Care about kids	You will be heard
Feed them by building relationships	Connection
Strong family roots	Inspire
Students feel loved	Provide security and belonging, love and attention
Support from staff & programs	Family-community feel
Teachers care	Feels like family
Respect and love	Feel support
Support	Partnership
You are treated with respect	Strong sense of community
Work as a team to raise each other up	Creativity
Creative minds	Inspire, motivate, and challenge students
Cultivate Curiosity	Care
Wonderful people who care	
Community based	
Provides a sense of community	
Safe and supportive environment	
It's a family	
They feel loved here	

Starr's Mill High Focus Groups
Notable Common Words/Phrases

Staff	Parent Community
The learning of young people to be lifelong learners	Tap into their creativity
Inspire, motivate	Students are seen as individuals
Educate, inspire, motivate	Partnership
Empowered, motivated, prepared, educated	Support
We build relationships with parents	Sense of belonging
Partnering with them to educate	Feeling cared for and supported
We create trust	Greet you as if you are family
We help each other	Inspire
Feel valued	Positive environment
My coworkers make me want to come to work	Teamwork
Support	Appreciation and support
Dedicated teachers	Caring and supportive
We are supported	Gives them a purpose
Collaborate and help each other grow	You feel safe
Students feel supported by all	It is such a community
Support who they are as a person	Sense of community
Build relationships	Teachers care and respect my children
Family oriented	Connected partnership
Make them feel valuable	Parents feel valued

Whitewater High Focus Groups
Notable Common Words/Phrases

Staff	Parent Community
Caring relationships	The close community is the most important
Teamwork	Inspire and motivate
Love	By building relationships
We are teamwork	Helps build a community
Good community feel no matter what feeder	Be respectful, be humble and kind
Strong sense of community and involvement	The care about the whole family
Care	
Easier when you build relationships	

APPENDIX A

MISSION / VISION STATEMENT SURVEY

Fayette County Public Schools is in the process of reviewing its current mission and vision statements, and is seeking input from staff, parents, and students.

Our current mission and vision is 7 years old, approved by the Fayette County Board of Education June 2016. This review of our mission and vision statements is overdue as ideally they should be reviewed every 5 years to ensure they address any significant changes in our community or major shifts in the needs or our stakeholders.

Please take time to complete the following survey. Your responses will help us in making updates that reflect the changing needs and expectations of our parents, employees, students, partners, and community. We value your feedback in this process and look forward to hearing from you.

* Indicates required question

1. What is your role at FCPS? (Check all that apply) *

    Check all that apply.

    ☐ Employee

    ☐ Parent

    ☐ Student

    ☐ Community Member

2. Which of the following do you consider to be your PRIMARY role with FCPS?   *
(Please select one)

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Employee

    ◯ Parent

    ◯ Student

    ◯ Community Member

3. Where is your PRIMARY location at FCPS? (Please select one)   *

Tell us the school/FCPS location where you go to school, work, or that serves the area where you live. If you are completing this survey as a student, select your school. If completing this survey as a parent, please select the school your oldest child attends. If you are completing this survey as an employee, please select your work location. Community members with no children in school can select that option.

Mark only one oval.

- Braelinn Elementary
- Cleveland Elementary
- Crabapple Lane Elementary
- Fayetteville Elementary
- Huddleston Elementary
- Inman Elementary
- Kedron Elementary
- North Fayette Elementary
- Oak Grove Elementary
- Peachtree City Elementary
- Peeples Elementary
- Robert J. Burch Elementary
- Sara Harp Minter Elementary
- Spring Hill Elementary
- Bennett's Mill Middle
- Flat Rock Middle
- J.C. Booth Middle
- Rising Starr Middle
- Whitewater Middle
- Center of Innovation
- Fayette County High
- Fayette LIFE Academy

◯ McIntosh High

◯ Sandy Creek High

◯ Starr's Mill High

◯ Whitewater High

◯ District Office

◯ Community Member/No Children

4. A quality mission statement does two important things: a) defines the purpose of * the organization, and b) differentiates the organization from similar entities.

The following is the current FCPS mission statement (adopted by the board of education June 2016): "Our mission is to forge and equip a community of learners who confidently face challenges, embrace opportunities, and positively impact our world."

Please review the current FCPS mission statement and indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. The current district mission statement…

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
is clear	◯	◯	◯	◯
is concise	◯	◯	◯	◯
distinguishes us from other schools/school districts	◯	◯	◯	◯
defines who we are	◯	◯	◯	◯
describes what we do	◯	◯	◯	◯
identifies who we serve	◯	◯	◯	◯

5. Please elaborate on any areas marked Disagree or Strongly Disagree. *

_____

6. Please review the current FCPS mission statement.   *
"Our mission is to forge and equip a community of learners who confidently face challenges, embrace opportunities, and positively impact our world."

What aspects of our current mission do you like? (May identify up to 3 items)
Answer 1

_____

7. **Answer 2**

_____

8. **Answer 3**

_____

9. Please review the current FCPS mission statement.   *
"Our mission is to forge and equip a community of learners who confidently face challenges, embrace opportunities, and positively impact our world."

What is missing from our current mission? (May identify up to 3 items)
Answer 1

_____

10. **Answer 2**

_____

11. **Answer 3**

_____

12. A vision statement looks to the future and defines aspirations. This differs from *
    the mission statement that focuses on the present and defines purpose.

    The following is the current vision of Fayette County Public Schools (adopted
    by the board of education in June 2016): "Our students will be capable of living
    and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment."

    Please review the current FCPS vision statement and indicate your level of
    agreement with the following statements. The current district vision
    statement…

    Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
is clear	◯	◯	◯	◯
is concise	◯	◯	◯	◯
distinguishes us from other schools/school districts	◯	◯	◯	◯
is inspirational/aspirational	◯	◯	◯	◯
describes the future we wish for our children	◯	◯	◯	◯

13. Please elaborate on any areas marked Disagree or Strongly Disagree. *

14. Please review the current FCPS vision statement.   *
    "Our students will be capable of living and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment."

    What aspects of our current vision do you like? (May identify up to 3 items)
    Answer 1

    _____

15. **Answer 2**

    _____

16. **Answer 3**

    _____

17. Please review the current FCPS vision statement.   *
    "Our students will be capable of living and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment."

    What is missing from our current vision? (May identify up to 3 items)
    Answer 1

    _____

18. **Answer 2**

    _____

19. **Answer 3**

    _____

20. What three words or phrases would you use to best describe our school district? What makes FCPS special, unique, different using a word or short phrase (e.g. an essential element of FCPS' identity). *

Answer 1

_____

21. **Answer 2**

_____

22. **Answer 3**

_____

Thank you for taking time to provide your input. It will be considered as leaders review and refine the school district's direction for the future.

APPENDIX B

2023-24 Vision and Mission Statement Focus Groups

Fall 2023

Fayette County Public Schools

Where Excellence and Creativity Merge

Welcome to the Staff Focus Group

Focus Group Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Mission**
    - Warm-up Activity and Video
    - 5 Whys Activity
    - Who We Serve Activity
- **Vision**
    - Warm-up Activity
    - Wouldn't It Be Fantastic If Activity
- **Closing Activity**
- **Questions**

Ground Rules

- We want everyone to express your opinions about the discussion topics.
- We are interested in different points of view.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- We are not here to resolve any issues you may bring up or to reach agreement. We just want to understand your views.

Ground Rules, *continued...*

- Give us only your first name or a nickname. No one needs identifying information about you.

- If you know each other, we ask that you agree to keep information confidential.

- If you discuss the things people said here, do not identify the people who said them.

- Feel free to agree or disagree with what other people say, while respecting their views.

Ground Rules, *continued...*

- Please do not hold side conversations. We want to be able to hear from everyone, and to be able to hear what everyone says.

- Please wait to be recognized by the facilitator before speaking.

- Sometimes, we will go around the table to share views on a topic. You can always "pass" if you prefer not to comment on that topic.

Who is in the Room?

- Introduce yourself

  - First name or nickname

  - What is your position?

  - How long have you worked for the school system?

Let's Get Started

Mission: Our core purpose, why we exist. A mission defines the "why" behind what we do and our reason for doing it.

Vision: Is aspirational; it's where we want to be in the future. The vision should be ambitious but not so much that it is impossible to achieve.

Mission Statement Warm-up Activity

1. Be the earth's most customer-centric company.

2. Forge and equip a community of learners who confidently face challenges, embrace opportunities, and positively impact our world.

3. With every cup, with every conversation, with every community– we nurture the limitless possibilities of human connection.

4. Offer a wide-range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them.

5. Advance new ideas and promote enduring knowledge.

6. Help people go anywhere and get anything and earn their way.

Mission Statement Warm-up Activity

1. Be the earth's most customer-centric company. **Amazon**

2. Forge and equip a community of learners who confidently face challenges, embrace opportunities, and positively impact our world.
   Fayette County Public Schools

3. With every cup, with every conversation, with every community– we nurture the limitless possibilities of human connection. **Starbucks**

4. Offer a wide-range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them. **Ikea**

5. Advance new ideas and promote enduring knowledge. **Harvard**

6. Help people go anywhere and get anything and earn their way. **Uber**

Start With the Why

Simon Sinek TedTalk: Start With the Why

The 5 "Whys"

- What is our Why? Why are we in business?
- Why does this matter? (1)
- Why does this matter? (2)
- Why does this matter? (3)
- Why does this matter? (4)
- Why does this matter (5)

Who Do We Serve?

Who	What we do for them	How we do it	The difference we make to them
Students			
Parents			
Employees			
Community			
Businesses			

Vision Statement Warm-up Activity

1. Create the future, own the outcome, raise the bar, and be genuine– represent who we are, how we show up in the world, and how we'll define our future success.

2. Building our legend and leading through innovation, evolution, and emotion.

3. We have committed to creating and sustaining the conditions that enable all students to experience an unparalleled educational journey that is intellectually, socially, and personally transformative.

4. Build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online.

5. Capture and share the world's moments.

6. Students will be capable of living and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment.

Vision Statement Warm-up Activity

1. Create the future, own the outcome, raise the bar, and be genuine– represent who we are, how we show up in the world, and how we'll define our future success. **Adobe**

2. Building our legend and leading through innovation, evolution, and emotion. **Harley-Davidson**

3. We have committed to creating and sustaining the conditions that enable all students to experience an unparalleled educational journey that is intellectually, socially, and personally transformative. **Harvard**

4. Build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online. **Amazon**

5. Capture and share the world's moments. **Instagram**

6. Students will be capable of living and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment. **Fayette County Public Schools**

Wouldn't It Be Fantastic If…

Focusing on our "why" and the difference we want to make to our colleagues, students, parents, community, and others, complete the statements below.

"Wouldn't it be fantastic if, by…

… the end of this year _____."

… the end of three years from now _____."

… the end of five years from now _____."

We Are FCPS

If you were to describe our school district to a friend who does not live in the area, what would you tell them?

Thank you!

FAYETTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Where Excellence and Creativity Merge

2023-24 Vision and Mission Statement Focus Groups

Fall 2023

Welcome to the Parent & Community Focus Group

Focus Group Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Mission**
  - Warm-up Activity and Video
  - 5 Whys Activity
  - Who We Serve Activity
- **Vision**
  - Warm-up Activity
  - Wouldn't It Be Fantastic If Activity
- **Closing Activity**
- **Questions**

Ground Rules

- We want everyone to express your opinions about the discussion topics.
- We are interested in different points of view.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- We are not here to resolve any issues you may bring up or to reach agreement. We just want to understand your views.

KEEP CALM AND **Give your OPINION**

Ground Rules, *continued...*

- Give us only your first name or a nickname. No one needs identifying information about you.

- If you know each other, we ask that you agree to keep information confidential.

- If you discuss the things people said here, do not identify the people who said them.

- Feel free to agree or disagree with what other people say, while respecting their views.

Ground Rules, *continued...*

- Please do not hold side conversations. We want to be able to hear from everyone, and to be able to hear what everyone says.

- Please wait to be recognized by the facilitator before speaking.

- Sometimes, we will go around the table to share views on a topic. You can always "pass" if you prefer not to comment on that topic.

Who is in the Room?

- Introduce yourself

  - First name or nickname

  - Are you a parent or community member?

  - How long have you lived in the area?

Let's Get Started

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3. With every cup, with every conversation, with every community– we nurture the limitless possibilities of human connection.

4. Offer a wide-range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them.

5. Advance new ideas and promote enduring knowledge.

6. Help people go anywhere and get anything and earn their way.

Mission Statement Warm-up Activity

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   Fayette County Public Schools

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Simon Sinek TedTalk: Start With the Why

The 5 "Whys"

- What is our Why? Why are we in business?
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- Why does this matter? (2)
- Why does this matter? (3)
- Why does this matter? (4)
- Why does this matter (5)

Who Do We Serve?

Who	What we do for them	How we do it	The difference we make to them
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Parents			
Employees			
Community			
Businesses			

Vision Statement Warm-up Activity

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2. Building our legend and leading through innovation, evolution, and emotion.
3. We have committed to creating and sustaining the conditions that enable all students to experience an unparalleled educational journey that is intellectually, socially, and personally transformative.
4. Build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online.
5. Capture and share the world's moments.
6. Students will be capable of living and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment.

Vision Statement Warm-up Activity

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6. Students will be capable of living and working effectively, responsibly, and productively in a global environment. **Fayette County Public Schools**

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"Wouldn't it be fantastic if, by…

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… the end of three years from now _____."

… the end of five years from now _____."

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Thank you!